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Chairman: Mr. Chowdhury ..... (Bangladesh)
later: Ms. Zubčević (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Croatia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 95: Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/58/3 (Part I), A/58/210, A/58/337, A/58/362, A/C.2/58/5 and A/C.2/58/6)

Agenda item 96: United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

Agenda item 94: Environment and sustainable development

(d) Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/58/3 (Part I), A/58/170, A/58/303, A/58/304 and A/C.2/58/4)

1. **Mr. Ocampo** (Deputy Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), drawing the attention of delegates to reports A/58/210 and A/58/170, submitted under agenda items 95 and 94(d), said that the Johannesburg Summit had been hailed as a major leap forward for sustainable development. Four aspects were particularly promising. In the first place, the specific objectives and more than 25 targets identified in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation created conditions for achieving concrete results. In the second place, the Plan included development objectives that had been agreed at the international level, including the Millennium Development Goals, which were considered the final objectives of sustainable development. Thus, the social and economic dimensions were better integrated into the environmental objectives. The Plan was based on the commitments made at the Millennium Summit, the fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in Doha and the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development. In the third place, the Plan recognized the challenge of sustainable development in a globalizing world, which could only be resolved through a multilateral strategy. The private sector had an important role to play, and the Plan encouraged it not only in that regard but also by stressing the need for transparency in business and the importance of improving governance at the national and international levels, all of which were prerequisites for equitable globalization and sustainable development. Finally, partnerships focusing on solutions had given new meaning to the implementation phase launched by the Summit inasmuch as they made sustainable development everybody's business.

2. The Summit had given rise to a number of commitments and ideas. To date, action taken by governments, United Nations agencies, major groups, civil society and the private sector had been very encouraging, and all concerned were determined to achieve concrete results. In April 2003, the Commission on Sustainable Development had decided to organize its future work in two-year implementation cycles. It had also taken measures to strengthen the involvement of major groups and of civil society in implementation. It had invited the regional commissions to organize regional implementation meetings in order to contribute to the global review of implementation. The work programmes of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UN-Habitat, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and other agencies were focusing on implementation of the texts originating in the Johannesburg Summit. The High-Level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) was drawing up proposals on future inter-agency coordination of follow up to the Summit; those proposals should be ready in time for the next session of the Board. Governments and major groups had organized a number of initiatives and international events. Significant progress had been made towards drawing up the 10-year framework of programmes for sustainable consumption and production, especially with the launching of the Marrakech Process. To date, the Website of the Commission on Sustainable Development showed that nearly 230 partnerships had been registered and 35 processes had been undertaken to initiate partnerships. The leading partners had announced that some US$ 252 million had been committed for partnership-related activities. An additional US$ 120 million was being sought or negotiated with potential donors. All those developments were encouraging signs but should not mask the difficulties encountered in other areas, particularly with regard to means of implementation.

3. The breakdown of negotiations at Cancun had been a hard blow to the goals of sustainable development and poverty reduction. Nearly two third of poor people lived in rural areas of developing

countries and depended on agriculture for their subsistence. Denying them access to the markets of developed countries meant depriving them of the ability to break the vicious cycle of poverty. It was therefore essential that the Doha negotiations should be continued without delay. Trade was also an important means for the transfer of technology. The multilateral trade system should pay more attention to preferential access for clean, environmentally sound technology. The financial commitments made at Monterrey should be honoured and more resources should be allocated for the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

4. The international meeting to review implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action should also provide an occasion to breathe new life into the follow up to the Johannesburg Summit. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs was working closely with the Alliance of Small Island States to facilitate the preparation of national assessment reports and organize regional meetings, in which non-independent small island developing States and civil society had participated. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP and the Commonwealth Secretariat had helped prepare the national assessment reports in small island developing States. In order to ensure maximum coordination among all institutions and organizations in preparing for the international meeting, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs had established the Inter-Agency Task Force comprised of the coordinators responsible for small island developing States in all the United Nations agencies involved. The role of the Department and the regional commissions in the follow up to the substantive activities carried out in the context of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action would continue to be completed by the political role of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

5. All the events to be held should provide an opportunity for the international community to renew its commitment to the sustainable development of small island developing States. Their special geographical position made them more vulnerable than other countries to the potential risks of development as it was currently conceived. Some of them could even disappear unless progress was made in regard to climate change and the sea level rise it could cause. For those countries, sustainable development was not only a matter of progress but, above all, of survival.

6. **Mr. Kyazze** (UNESCO), speaking under agenda item 96, said that at the 1992 Rio Summit, a consensus regarding the key role of education in sustainable development had emerged which had been strengthened at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. Against that background, the General Assembly had decided to proclaim the ten-year period beginning on 1 January 2005 the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and had designated the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as the lead agency for the promotion of the Decade. Accordingly, UNESCO had been charged with drawing up a draft international implementation scheme, in consultation with the United Nations and other relevant international organizations, governments, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, and taking into account existing international initiatives, in particular the Dakar Framework for Action adopted at the World Education Forum in 2000 and the United Nations Literacy Decade which had begun in 2003. The implementation scheme should pursue the main objective of the Decade, which was to mobilize governments and help them promote education for sustainable development by integrating it, at the appropriate level, into their educational strategies and plans of action.

7. Education was not only an end in itself, it was also a driving force for change aimed at sustainable development. By that he meant the broad concept of interdisciplinary education combining know-how and competencies which would help ensure a sustainable future and which was contingent upon changes in values, behaviour and lifestyle. To that end, educational systems, policies and practices must be restructured so as to enable everyone, the young and not-so-young, to make decisions and take action, in their own local cultural environment, to meet their common challenges. Sustainable development was basically a question of learning, i.e., of learning sustainable patterns of production and consumption. As the lead agency for chapter 36 of Agenda 21, UNESCO had helped the international community to better understand the fundamental concept of education for sustainable development and had encouraged the transfer of innovations between countries by organizing international conferences and regional

workshops and designing model curricula and training materials. The Organization's Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), which brought together establishments from 170 countries, promoted the principles of peace, human rights, equality and environmental protection.

8. In developing the draft implementation scheme, UNESCO was conducting interdisciplinary consultations with all stakeholders in the developed and developing countries. Drawing from the reality in the field, those consultations would help to ensure that the strategies proposed correlated research findings with data taken from the countries' experiences. To that end, in early August UNESCO had distributed a draft framework for the international implementation scheme to its United Nations partners as well as to other competent organizations, governments, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders involved in developing the final text. The draft laid down a set of principles and described the stages that would be involved in developing the international implementation scheme. The consultations should enable countries to include measures in their own strategies and plans of action for implementation of the Decade. The first international consultations, which had brought together nine United Nations agencies, as well as the World Bank, had been held on 5 September in Paris. The idea was to identify the value added of the Decade itself and the value it could add to individual agencies. The Organization had already established partnerships with several United Nations agencies in their areas of expertise, especially in connection with education for all.

9. The UNESCO NGO Liaison Committee, representing around 350 non-governmental organizations in the field of education, had set up a special committee charged with mobilizing its members for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The committee was currently cooperating with UNESCO in organizing the Decade. The Organization welcomed the idea of collaborating with governments, the academic community, associations, non-governmental organizations and civil society groups in drawing up national plans of action and giving shape to the implementation scheme.

10. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), speaking on agenda item 94(d), stressed the remarkable significance of the adoption by the General Assembly of its resolution 57/262, in which it had decided to convene an international meeting in 2004 to undertake a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, as called for in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. His Office was collaborating closely with the Alliance of Small Island States and the SIDS Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The three SIDS regions mentioned in the resolution had concluded their preparatory meetings earlier in October and were now poised to bring together their outcomes to the interregional meeting in January 2004 to be forged in a common SIDS platform. The three-day preparatory meeting to be held during the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development would carry the preparatory process further.

11. It was important to ensure the widest possible involvement of all stakeholders in the preparatory process. In addition to Member States, in particular donor countries, which were urged to participate at very high levels, the participation of the major groups identified in Agenda 21 and agencies and organizations both within and outside the United Nations system would be essential and critical. In that regard, he wished to emphasize the importance of full participation by the multilateral financial institutions, in particular the Bretton Woods institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations.

12. Another point to be borne in mind was the need for a focused agenda with clearly identified priorities. It was absolutely essential that the meeting should result in an implementable outcome with specific follow-up and monitoring arrangements. It was necessary to benefit from the lessons learnt during the last nine years while implementing the Barbados Programme of Action so as not to repeat the same mistakes. In identifying the priorities for the International Meeting, it would be useful to focus on the issue of vulnerability – economic, social and environmental – of the Small Island Developing States, poverty eradication measures, freshwater issues, climate change, development of marine resources and sustainable fisheries, the emerging pandemic of HIV/AIDS, the issue of connectivity and, of course, trade-related issues. It was pertinent to bear in mind

that the issues of regional integration of and declining resources for the small island developing States were of crosscutting concern. The Office of the High Representative was building partnerships to further the cause of those countries and to mobilize and coordinate international support.

13. While continuing to contribute to the preparations of the International Meeting, the members of the Alliance of Small Island States needed to seize the opportunities offered by major upcoming global events, specifically the High Level Dialogue on Financing for Development, the Marrakech Meeting on South-South Cooperation, the World Summit on the Information Society, the Doha Round and most importantly, the eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

14. **Mr. Diallo** (Executive Secretary, Convention to Combat Desertification), speaking on agenda item 95, said he wished to refer back briefly to the report of the Secretary-General on Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (A/58/158). The report dealt mainly with the implementation of General Assembly resolution A/57/259, the first session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, the follow up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development on matters pertaining to the Convention and relations between the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Convention. In his report, the Secretary-General proposed a number of measures that the General Assembly might wish to take to further the implementation of the Convention.

15. Eleven years after the idea of a convention on desertification had been included in chapter 12 of Agenda 21, the Convention to Combat Desertification had been ratified by 190 countries that were committed to its implementation so as to check the land degradation that was causing many people to become displaced as they sought to survive.

16. The World Summit on Sustainable Development had breathed new life into the Convention. Indeed, the participants in the Summit had decided to review its financing so as to provide it with increased and more predictable resources and to designate GEF as the financial mechanism for the Convention. In addition, the Facility had adopted the operational programme on sustainable land management to operationalize the designation of land degradation as a focal area.

17. The sixth session of the Conference of the Parties had marked a turning point in the life of the Convention, thanks to the high level of political participation and the crucial decisions that had been adopted. The participants had adopted a Declaration reaffirming their political will to support the Convention. Nevertheless, the commitment of the industrialized States had not measured up to that of the developing countries. Bearing in mind that the Convention was based on the principle of partnership, he felt constrained to stress that it was essential for the developed countries to participate in the Conferences of the Parties. The ministers of the developing countries had deplored the lack of enthusiasm shown by their partners.

18. Most of the decisions had dealt with the new measures proposed by the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention aimed at furthering the implementation of the Convention and its institutional development. The participants in the Conference of the Parties had also adopted the budget of the secretariat and of the Global Mechanism.

19. Since the Conference of the Parties held in Havana had been the first major meeting of the Parties after the World Summit on Sustainable Development, there had been a lengthy discussion on follow up to the Summit in areas relevant to the Convention. The Parties had welcomed the Summit's recognition of the Convention as a tool for poverty eradication and had underlined the importance of the implementation of the Convention for meeting the Millennium Development Goals. They had urged all development partners to make use of the Convention in their strategies to achieve the Goals.

20. The implementation of the Convention was not a task only for governmental agencies, but rather it entailed giving a greater role to non-governmental organizations, local organizations and civil society groups that had regularly participated in the sessions of the Conference of the Parties. He congratulated the partners who had helped finance the participation of developing countries in the latest Conference of the Parties and in the preparatory activities, thus ensuring that they would be complete and open. He also thanked the Cuban Government for its role in organizing and hosting the Conference.

21. The different stages of the Convention had taken time, but from 1992 onward, the international community had advanced with determination so as to give the world an operational tool for improving the day-to-day existence of hundreds of millions of people. During the early years of the Convention, efforts had been devoted to advocacy activities aimed at identifying its objectives. Some people still saw desertification as a local problem, but the phenomenon had global dimensions that called for joint action at the worldwide level.

22. To date, considering the number of countries that had ratified the Convention and the recent meetings in Johannesburg, Beijing and Havana, expectations were high. A good number of partners had already taken concrete steps to implement the Convention and had adopted initiatives to help the countries in that task.

23. The progress that had been made over all those years would not have been possible without the full participation of countries, United Nations agencies, donors, non-governmental organizations and local populations. The same level of support would be needed during the operational stage of implementation that was now beginning. More resources would likely be needed as well, so as to enhance the capacity of developing countries to overcome their institutional difficulties and find solutions to the serious social problems they faced.

24. **Mr. Ashe** (Antigua and Barbuda) asked the Chairman if he planned to give the floor to delegations that might wish to ask questions of participants, including to Mr. Diallo, Executive Secretary of the Convention to Combat Desertification.

25. The **Chairman** replied that he had not planned to do so, but if the delegations wished, he would give them the floor.

26. **Mr. Ashe** (Antigua and Barbuda) said that he did not know if other delegations wished to speak. He regretted that Mr. Diallo had not been present when his counterparts had spoken on Friday last. As far as advocacy was concerned, had it not been for the personal intervention of Mr. Diallo, his country might not have ratified the Convention yet. During the last Conference of the Parties, some countries had considered that such activities should be put on the back burner so as to give priority to implementation. At the current stage of implementation of the Convention, certain parties – but not the delegation of Antigua and Barbuda – had deplored a lack of transparency. He would therefore like to know what recommendations the auditors had made concerning the management of the Convention secretariat.

27. **Mr. Diallo** (Executive Secretary, Convention to Combat Desertification) said that the report of the last Conference of the Parties explicitly referred to the reports of the auditors for the last few years. To date, the auditors had never reported any irregularities in the way the secretariat managed its resources and staff. The reports in question had been submitted to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and to the Fifth Committee and were available to delegations. He wondered what it was that those who demanded transparency wanted and invited them to tell him on what issues they wanted clarification.

28. The last Conference of the Parties had been preceded by ample in-depth discussions, so that everyone had had an opportunity to contribute to its organization and its content. He therefore did not know of any problem that would merit special attention.

29. The secretariat would not hinder any delegation that felt the phase of advocacy activities had ended and it was time to move on to implementation – quite the contrary. Around 60 countries had already started national and subregional action programmes and were only waiting for the partnerships needed for implementation to begin.

30. In conclusion, stressing that the secretariat's actions had all been carried out in broad daylight, he said that the Convention secretariat's only ambition was to serve the Member States.

31. **Mr. Arrouchi** (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group of 77 and China welcomed the reports of the Secretary-General (A/58/170 and A/58/210), which described the first follow-up measures taken by the international community to honour its commitments to sustainability.

32. Against the backdrop of a whole range of international commitments to sustainability, a billion people were still suffering from poverty and hunger, climate change was destabilizing many nations, millions of children were still dying because they lacked access to drinking water and sanitation, disease was still taking millions of lives, and the gap between

the poor and the rich was growing as unsustainable patterns of production and consumption persisted.

33. In its resolution 57/253, the General Assembly had decided to adopt sustainable development as a key element of the overarching framework for United Nations activities, in particular for achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and to give overall political direction to the implementation of Agenda 21 and its review. It had reaffirmed the need to ensure a balance between economic development, social development and environmental protection as interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development, and had also reaffirmed that poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development were overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for, sustainable development.

34. Nevertheless, those objectives could not be achieved in the absence of genuine political will. While it was true that implementation was carried out at the national level, both the Johannesburg Declaration and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development stressed the importance of multilateral action and the need for the international community to strengthen its support. The method of implementation chosen for the follow up to the World Summit for Sustainable Development called for stable means and resources.

35. Since follow-up measures had been decided at the intergovernmental level, the Group of 77 and China wished to remind the international community that its action on behalf of sustainable development should be focused on fulfilling the commitments made, and it should not waste time discussing norms. They welcomed the important decisions that had been taken at the intergovernmental level, which had immediate impact on the implementation of the commitments made in Johannesburg.

36. Referring to the decisions taken at the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, he said that the achievement of the different objectives for the issues raised in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation entailed addressing them all simultaneously, in a parallel process. The choice of a particular thematic cluster should not in any way mean that implementation priority had to be given to the questions included in that cluster to the detriment of other issues. As a high-level intergovernmental agency promoting sustainable development, the Commission on Sustainable Development should ensure the effective implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. It should conduct a scientific qualitative and quantitative assessment of progress achieved, so as to enable the Second Committee to decide what additional measures should be taken to strengthen the implementation process.

37. On the matter of integrated and coordinated follow up to the outcomes of the Summit, he said that the Group of 77 and China wished to stress that implementation of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the General Assembly on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits was a fundamental stage in strengthening implementation.

38. The Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions played a key role in strengthening coordination at the system-wide level. Major donors, international organizations, the private sector and competent agencies, among others, should make regular and substantial contributions to the World Solidarity Fund, which played a crucial role in eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development by financing projects submitted by the developing countries. The Group of 77 and China welcomed the different actions carried out by the agencies of the United Nations system, which should cooperate with the Commission on Sustainable Development in order to strengthen efforts to achieve development goals.

39. All competent agencies, both within and outside the United Nations system, should fully cooperate in efforts to achieve sustainable development objectives; much remained to be done in that regard. Only through collective and concerted action on their part would it be possible to meet the expectations of millions of people who suffered the scourge of poverty. The Group of 77 and China hoped that United Nations agencies, programmes and funds, the Global Environment Facility and financial and business institutions would

participate in the work of the next session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

40. While recognizing the importance of encouraging partnerships and holding them accountable, the Group of 77 and China reaffirmed that such partnerships should be viewed as supplementary tools for strengthening the implementation process, not as substitutes for the intergovernmental commitments made in Agenda 21 or the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Their contribution should be impartial, effective, useful and focused on concrete results, in accordance with the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The review of the implementation process should be transparent. Moreover, the involvement of United Nations agencies in partnerships should honour the mandates handed down at the intergovernmental level and should not entail diverting resources allocated for intergovernmental priorities. The Group of 77 and China supported the recommendations contained in paragraph 51 of the report of the Secretary-General on Activities undertaken in implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/58/210).

41. Turning to agenda item 94(d), he noted that the participants in the World Summit on Sustainable Development had recognized the special problems faced by small island developing States and had stressed the need for special support to help them advance towards sustainable development. The group of small island developing States was an important part of the Group of 77 and China, which commended them for their determination to overcome the obstacles they faced in their efforts to achieve sustainable development.

42. In Johannesburg, the international community had also decided to undertake a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados Programme of Action). The Group welcomed the convening in Mauritius of a major international meeting which would surely provide an opportunity for renewing political commitment to pursue the Programme of Action.

43. The three regional preparatory meetings that had already been held had shown that the small island developing States were determined to implement the Barbados Programme of Action but that international support was inconsistent and inadequate. The situation of the small island developing States had deteriorated considerably, creating new obstacles to overcome.

44. Although the resolution to be considered at the present session dealt mainly with procedural questions, he would like to comment on his expectations for the process. The Group of 77 and China did not intend to negotiate the Barbados Programme of Action, but they felt that when it came to implementation, new social and economic problems that hindered the sustainable development of the countries concerned should be taken into account. They hoped that the General Assembly would finance the participation of developing countries in the international meeting and recalled that in resolution 57/262, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to give further consideration to strengthening the Small Island Developing States Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, thereby enabling the Unit to assist in the preparations for the comprehensive review of the Programme of Action. They urged the international community to facilitate the participation of small island developing States in the different preparatory activities and encouraged the development partners to participate in such activities at the highest level.

45. Desertification was a complex global phenomenon and was one of the main obstacles to the achievement of sustainable development goals, particularly poverty eradication. The problem was finding a way to ensure that the Convention to Combat Desertification would be an effective tool for addressing the problem. The Group of 77 and China noted with great concern that in the absence of long-term strategies and means of implementation, the phenomenon of desertification was worsening and that it continued to have extremely damaging effects on a large percentage of the world's population.

46. There was an urgent need for action at every level. Comprehensive long-term strategies must be drawn up and an implementation process must be devised to achieve the objectives of the Convention. The following points, in particular, should be borne in mind. Data bases should be created to allow for a global approach in further studies of the desertification process, and the data obtained should be widely disseminated. Local populations should participate in

decision making, and sustainable and responsible partnerships should be established among the actors.

47. The keys to combating desertification were financing and a firm long-term political commitmen at all levels in the countries. The Plan of Implementation adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development made it clear that adequate and predictable financing was essential to the realization of the objectives of sustainable development. The Group welcomed the choice of GEF as the financial mechanism for the Convention and trusted that the contribution of the Global Mechanism would also be helpful.

48. The Group of 77 and China urged the international community to take concrete steps to implement the Convention through cooperation programmes. They urged the United Nations funds and programmes, the Bretton Woods institutions, donor countries and other development agencies to include the provisions of the Convention in their strategies and to support the Millennium Development Goals and other development objectives that had been adopted. They requested the Secretary-General to include in the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 the necessary funds for the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and of the subsidiary bodies.

49. During the biennium 2008-2009, the international community would have another opportunity, in the context of the Commission on Sustainable Development, to evaluate the progress achieved in combating desertification. In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China wished to thank the Cuban Government for hosting the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties.

50. **Mr. MacKay** (New Zealand), speaking on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum, said that the vulnerability of small island developing States had increased since the adoption of the Barbados Programme of Action. There was no need for the Mauritius meeting to renegotiate the Barbados Programme of Action; rather, the Mauritius meeting should review its implementation and clearly identify further priority action for the sustainable development of small island developing States. The focus should be on mobilizing political support and ensuring that the outcomes from the process were rightly focused, action oriented and time-bound.

51. The issue of climate change should be considered, bearing in mind its special impact on the region. Further commitments must be made by all major emitters so as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The meeting should consider adaptation options for extreme weather and climate events and should call for those options to be supported at regional and national levels, including through the Global Environment Facility.

52. New and growing challenges for small island developing States should also be addressed, namely: rising poverty; HIV/AIDS; capacity building; the need to strengthen governance; the need to develop information and communication technologies; the importance of renewable energy technologies; and security. It was important to ensure that the vulnerable States, along with other developing countries, were able to participate in a fairer, more open, world trading system.

53. Countries must be persuaded to work together to improve the management of marine resources, given that small island developing States attached great importance to protecting and restoring coastal and marine ecosystems.

54. The member countries of the Forum had launched type II partnership initiatives covering a range of activities including capacity building, governance, renewable energy, biodiversity and oceans. Those activities had been coordinated by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme. It was to be hoped that other sources of financing could also be found so as to extend the network of partners.

55. The Pacific Islands Forum fully supported the proposed changes in the Commission on Sustainable Development, which would enable it to better facilitate the implementation of the agreements and plans the international community had made in the field of sustainable development.

56. *Ms. Zubčević (Croatia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

57. **Mr. Isakov** (Russian Federation) said that at the present stage of international cooperation for sustainable development, priority should be given to comprehensive and systematic implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development with due regard for the specific situations and interests of all countries. The eleventh session of

the Commission on Sustainable Development had breathed life into those efforts. Every effort should be made to ensure that the Commission worked well with the new system it had adopted for its work, particularly by taking as soon as possible the necessary decisions concerning the mandate of its Bureau and the accreditation of non-governmental organizations for the twelfth session of the Commission. In that regard, the procedure currently applied in the United Nations should be borne in mind, and every effort should be made to ensure that the organizations accredited to the World Summit on Sustainable Development that had not yet been granted consultative status with the Economic and Social Council had an opportunity to participate actively in the work of the Commission.

58. The Russian Federation felt that one of the main objectives for partnerships established in the context of sustainable development programmes should be to take advantage of traditional or innovative financing mechanisms in order to expand the resource base, particularly in promoting collaboration with the private sector. Since all the partnerships – governments, international organizations, corporations and non-governmental organizations – had a responsibility to fulfil in implementing the outcomes of the Johannesburg Summit, the United Nations Secretariat should consider the possibilities available for organizing the best possible dialogue among representatives of civil society.

59. The review of implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action should significantly advance the implementation of the outcomes of the Johannesburg Summit. The discussions on the sustainable development of small island developing States should be based on the parameters established by the World Summit, the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly and the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. His delegation also attached great importance to the preparations for and the celebration of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and looked forward to further work by the United Nations Forum on Forests, which had begun implementing its multi-year programme of work.

60. Turning to public health as an important aspect of sustainable development, he said that his country had launched an initiative that was designed to strengthen the international epidemiological surveillance system so as to prevent and combat dangerous infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and severe acute respiratory syndrome.

61. The Russian Federation welcomed the progress of international cooperation on questions relating to water and the outcome of the International Fresh Water Forum, held in Dushanbe from 29 August to 1 September 2003. Russia supported the initiative of Tajikistan asking the United Nations to declare 2005 to 2015 the international decade of water for life and had been a sponsor of the corresponding draft resolution.

62. Russia was also pleased with the outcome of the International Expert Meeting on a 10-year framework of programmes for sustainable consumption and production held in Marrakech in June 2003, which represented an important first step in the development of a 10-year framework of programmes for international cooperation in that area.

63. Despite its continuing economic difficulties, Russia had intensified its action to promote sustainable development. It was making a systematic effort to integrate ecological and social factors in its national development strategy. In 2003, it had fully adhered to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. It would actively promote international cooperation in the context of the Convention and help find solutions to the serious problems of land degradation and desertification by providing expert services in different areas, including space surveillance, or helping to train specialists from developing countries.

64. **Mr. Balarezo** (Peru), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that poverty eradication, changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns and protecting and managing the natural resource base, all aspects of sustainable development, should continue to be a central concern of States and of United Nations agencies, international organizations and institutions, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society.

65. In order to attain those objectives, the developing countries should be able to rely on the cooperation and support of developed countries in terms of transfers of financial resources, strengthening of human resource capacities and scientific and technical assistance.

66. In order to establish a democratic, predictable and stable international economic system that would further sustainable development, market access

should be opened up to developing countries, tariff and non-tariff barriers should be lifted, and the policy of subsidies practiced by developed countries, which distorted international trade, should be ended.

67. In order to fulfil its role as the arbiter of sustainable development, the Commission on Sustainable Development should put in place mechanisms for verifying States' fulfilment of their commitments. The Commission's decision to reorganize its programme of work into two-year implementation cycles and to adopt guidelines for improving coordination between the Commission and the secretariats of the conventions on environmental protection represented a step forward.

68. At its review session, the Commission would examine the Secretary-General's evaluation report, to which the Rio Group attached great importance. The report should show, for each item on the Commission's agenda that it covered, the correlation between economic development, social development and environmental protection. The Commission should also consider the countries' reports, which could be very useful in evaluating the implementation of Agenda 21. The Rio Group also attached great importance to enhancing the role of regional mechanisms through the implementation and integration of their contributions in the Commission's discussions on general policy questions. Perhaps the resources released by the termination of the work of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development could be used to support the participation of representatives of developing countries in the regional preparatory activities of the Commission.

69. The Rio Group was aware of its responsibilities in the area of sustainable development and was determined to contribute to the work of the Commission and play an active role in discussions at the world fresh water forum.

70. **Mr. Liu Hongyang** (China) said that international cooperation to promote sustainable development needed to be strengthened on the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual advantage. The Rio principles, particularly the principle of "common but differentiated responsibility", should be respected by everyone. In the search for sustainable development, all human, economic and social factors should be taken into account because poverty eradication could not be separated from economic and social development or from environmental protection.

71. It was the responsibility of the developed countries to give the developing countries with the means of implementation they needed, through development aid, technology transfer, market openness, lifting of trade barriers and reduction or cancellation of the foreign debt.

72. China recognized the essential role of the United Nations in promoting sustainable development. It welcomed the decision by the Commission on Sustainable Development to organize its work in two-year cycles. That decision would enable the Commission to better define the problems of sustainable development and to integrate subregional and regional measures into the global actions of the United Nations.

73. During the last 10 years, the small island developing States had drawn up national strategies for environmental protection and sustainable development. They had strengthened their environmental legislation and the institutions responsible for environmental protection and had increased cooperation within their group.

74. Nevertheless, the objectives set forth in the Barbados Programme of Action were far from being achieved because with globalization in full swing, the small island States were faced with new problems. China hoped that the forthcoming conference to review the implementation of the Programme of Action would clearly show that countries were fully determined to act and to overcome all obstacles.

75. China would continue drawing up and applying strategies to integrate social and economic development and environmental protection and to promote sustainable development through dialogue and cooperation with other countries.

76. **Mr. Qamar** (Pakistan) said that his country wished to align itself with the statement made by Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The dynamics of the global economy had altered some of the basic premises of Agenda 21. The process of globalization had accentuated economic asymmetries, sharpening the close relationships between trade and finance, technology and sustainable development. The polarization of wealth had led to a world in which an increasing number of people lived precariously

balanced on the edge of hunger. The populations of developing countries still lacked the basic amenities of life; they did not have access to basic education, clean water or basic sanitation. Poverty was out of control. At present, the danger to the planet's environment was greater than ever before; the world had witnessed the steady depletion of its natural resources, an increase in unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and a dangerous level of hazardous emissions threatening the global climate. Despite the many objectives and frameworks of action adopted at conferences on sustainable development, many of the commitments made had not been fulfilled, particularly those referring to financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building.

77. To turn the tide, priority must be given to poverty eradication and addressing the many problems it brought with it, by ensuring access to education, basic health care, water and sanitation services, shelter and clean environment. The conservation of natural resources was contingent upon changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production brought on by globalization. New sources of financing must be found to help developing countries embark on the path to sustainable development. Release of domestic resources for social development and poverty reduction through debt relief was crucial. Developing countries should have market access so as to be able to participate in world trade, and the developed countries, for their part, should reconsider the domestic and export subsidies they provided their farmers, to the detriment of farmers in the poor countries.

78. Pakistan was committed to implement Agenda 21 and had therefore developed an environmental protection act and established various institutions to address environmental problems. A national action plan on environmental protection was being pursued with the active participation of government, civil society and the private sector. The action plan aimed at improving the living standard and environmental conditions of the citizens of Pakistan. Its priority areas were clean air, clean water, solid waste management and ecosystem management.

79. Pakistan and the other developing countries needed international support, both technical and financial, in order to attain sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

80. **Mr. Koonjul** (Mauritius), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), said that his delegation endorsed the statement made by Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the Rio Conference on Environment and Development and later on, at Barbados, the international community had recognized that small island developing States (SIDS) were a special case. A consensus had been reached to the effect that achieving sustainable development was a pressing need for those countries, given the special difficulties they faced. Those difficulties were also the main obstacles hindering their development. While recognizing that it was their responsibility to create conditions for sustainable development, they found, as did the international community, that they were dependent upon foreign assistance. Still, there had been no appreciable improvement in the volume or the quality of the assistance they had received over the last 10 years. According to OECD figures, the amount of ODA had dropped by more than 50 per cent since 1990.

81. To the AOSIS countries, the preparations for the international meeting to undertake a 10-year review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action offered an opportunity to correct the situation and mobilize fresh international support for their sustainable development. The AOSIS countries were actively involved in the preparatory activities. To begin with, they were holding national consultations which involved having the Alliance members conduct a critical assessment of their actions and their achievements. Those consultations were nearly completed, and national evaluation reports would be prepared. In addition, the Alliance had organized a number of regional meetings to discuss issues relating to vulnerability, security and the adaptation capacity of small island developing States, as well as the specific economic problems faced by some of them, including trade liberalization, loss of privileges in the marketing of commodities and the decline of the tourism industry after the attacks of 11 September 2001.

82. The Alliance was also seeking the advice of experts in the different regions. The reports and case studies drawn up during the process would be distributed before the interregional preparatory meeting to be held in January 2004 in the Bahamas. That meeting would provide input to help determine the position of the small island developing States at the

session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

83. As far as the international meeting itself was concerned, the Alliance agreed with the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Countries and Small Island Developing States that the agenda should be limited to a few items; however, they felt it was important to discuss the new problems that seriously concerned the small island developing States, particularly HIV/AIDS, drugs, transnational crime and trade security. With regard to a text to be issued at the meeting, the Alliance would like to see the adoption of a political declaration reaffirming the commitments to sustainable development and a practical programme of action specifying time frames and means of implementation.

84. The 10-year review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action should produce clear guidance on what needed to be done to fulfil existing commitments and establish new ones so as to achieve the objectives set forth in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Renewable energy should also be a focus of discussions on a more global approach to the Kyoto Protocol.

85. In seeking the necessary international support, the Alliance had appealed to the agencies of the United Nations system. Since the different agencies had set up so many different programmes and mechanisms, the Alliance wished to stress the importance of coordination so as to enhance effectiveness. Moreover, since the SIDS Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs would be asked to assume greater responsibilities in the preparations for and the follow up to the international meeting, the Alliance found it surprising and regrettable that the two General Assembly resolutions recommending that the Unit should be strengthened had been ignored.

86. In conclusion, the Alliance urged the international community to support the full and effective participation of SIDS in the review of the Barbados Programme of Action, to contribute generously to the voluntary fund and to make every effort to ensure that stakeholders were represented at the meeting at a high level.

87. **Ms. Villalobos** (Venezuela) said that her country supported the statement made by Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, as well as the statement made by Peru on behalf of the Rio Group. International cooperation must be strengthened if the objective of sustainable development was to be attained and the problems arising from globalization, the spreading of epidemics, environmental deterioration and poverty were to be overcome.

88. The multi-year programme of work adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development would enable it to work towards that end, since the choice of thematic clusters for each two-year implementation cycle brought to light the relationship between social development, economic development and environmental protection and reflected a strong determination to act.

89. Venezuela recognized the Commission's desire to attain the objectives set at Johannesburg, as evidenced in its new working method, and appealed to all countries to meet their commitments. Implementation mechanisms must be set up in a spirit of cooperation and with adequate funding, and they must be backed by a strong political will.

90. Sustainable development was a responsibility of regions as well as individual countries. The countries' capacities must be strengthened in order to enable them to take responsibility for their own sustainable development.

91. **Mr. Al-Haddad** (Yemen) said that the World Summit on Sustainable Development had marked the beginning of collective efforts to achieve a number of specific objectives within strict time frames. In the view of his delegation, the development partners had not kept the time limits established, either for providing necessary resources or for transferring ecologically friendly technologies. In fact, only the bare minimum had been done in order to honour the commitments made in Johannesburg. Concerted action was still possible, however, if countries showed the political will to achieve common objectives while fulfilling their own individual responsibilities.

92. Yemen welcomed the outcome of the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, at which the working methods and future programme of work of the Commission had been significantly enhanced. His delegation looked forward to participating in the next session, at which the progress made in the implementation of Agenda 21 and of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation would be reviewed.

93. Yemen was aware of the need to protect the environment and to take action consistent with its commitment to ensure that its children and grandchildren did not have to run the risk of living on a hopelessly degraded and depleted planet. Accordingly, his Government paid special attention to protecting the country's environment, working with both government agencies and non-governmental organizations. The Government of Yemen had set up an environmental protection committee comprised of representatives of civil society, professional associations, young people, women, intellectuals and the academic community. In particular, sustainable development programmes had been started in the areas of water and health and human settlements, and studies were being conducted on consumption patterns that were harmful to the environment.

94. Yemen endorsed the conclusions and recommendations included in the report of the Secretary-General on Activities undertaken in implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/58/210). The international community should revitalize the follow up to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation by stressing the importance of honouring the commitments made and of conducting a prospective study of the obstacles to implementation. All possible types of cooperation and coordination between the United Nations agencies and intergovernmental institutions should be explored. The Commission on Sustainable Development had an important role to play in reviewing progress. Accordingly, the Commission's work should be enhanced through the sharing of experiences, particularly in connection with policy review and guidance.

95. Given the threats to which the earth was exposed, special attention should be given to education and sensitization for sustainable development. Countries should work together to ensure the success of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

96. In the interval between the Rio Conference and the Johannesburg Summit, many meetings had been held under the auspices of the United Nations. The international community, representatives of civil society and business had succeeded in forging a shared vision for mankind and for the well-being and prosperity of all, but mere words and declarations would not translate that vision into reality. Persistent, resolute and imaginative action was also needed in order to make it possible to achieve the agreed goals and for mankind to be able to achieve real prosperity and security.

97. **Mr. Berti** (Cuba) said that his country supported the statement made by Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The developing countries were having a hard time moving towards sustainable development, given that their development aid fell far short of the figures committed, and they were already bent over under the burden of the foreign debt. On the world market, they were outmatched by the developed countries. The ever-present spectre of poverty that loomed over them was now aggravated by land degradation and desertification.

98. Despite being subjected to an economic and commercial blockade for over forty years, Cuba had resolutely chosen the path of sustainable development. To that end, it had developed energy strategies based on the use of solar and hydroelectric energy and other forms of renewable energy and was also implementing plans for the restoration of watershed and forest areas.

99. In order to achieve the objective of sustainable development, the developing countries would need to receive a steady flow of fresh funds on favourable terms. They would need to see a reduction of their foreign debt, and the developed countries would need to keep their promise to earmark 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to official development assistance. The principle of common but differentiated responsibility with regard to environmental deterioration and development must be fully recognized. The developed countries must transfer the technologies needed to preserve the environment, and the developing countries must be given market access on special terms so that their exports would not be subject to market fluctuations.

100. **Mr. Nzusi** (Kenya) said that although progress had been made in certain areas, the overall status of achievements in the area of conservation and management of natural resources was disappointing. Essentially, the task identified by the international community at the World Summit on Sustainable Development was that of translating into action the commitments that had been made and the objectives that had been set. Consequently, there would have to be

a radical change in practices, and all stakeholders would need to refocus their programmes and readjust their timetables and their working methods.

101. Kenya appreciated the efforts that had been made to bring Africa into the world economy and protect its environment. It would be happy to support any initiative aimed at promoting the sustainable development of the continent. The adoption by the Commission on Sustainable Development of two-year action-oriented implementation cycles would greatly help to improve the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Unless the necessary measures were taken, efforts to achieve sustainable development would continue to be hindered by obstacles such as current macroeconomic policies, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, unsuitable natural resource management practices, poverty, the lack of financial means, wars and civic disturbances, and natural disasters. More emphasis should be placed on adopting policies designed to integrate the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development and on supporting the achievement of the objectives laid out at the Johannesburg Summit.

102. Kenya attached the utmost importance to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, as well as to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Over the last few years, it had undertaken political, legal and institutional reforms with that aim in mind. An act establishing an institutional framework for environmental management at all levels had been passed which stipulated that every citizen had the right to live in a clean and healthy environment and that everyone living in Kenya had the obligation to preserve and improve the environment.

103. The mobilization of increased financial resources remained a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development for all by eradicating poverty, improving the people's living conditions and standard of living and protecting the environment. A sustained effort must be made to help the African countries create a favourable environment for foreign direct investment in infrastructure, among other things. The establishment of the World Solidarity Fund, the strengthening of participation of major groups and the launching of partnership initiatives were steps in the right direction.

104. Kenya urged the funds and programmes of the United Nations, the regional economic commissions, the specialized agencies, the international financial institutions, the Global Environment Facility and the international organizations to increase their support for country programmes focused on capacity building, including the United Nations Development Programme's Capacity 2015 and the relevant activities of the United Nations Environment Programme.

105. Additional measures should be taken to develop partnership mechanisms to encourage technology transfer, the use of ecologically sound technologies and sustainable development in general, while stressing collective research studies and providing grants to strengthen institutions that promoted technologies for development. It was important to stress, however, that partnerships should be a supplement to rather than a substitute for commitments made at the intergovernmental level. Efficient mechanisms for promoting and monitoring partnerships should be put in place.

106. **Mr. Leslie** (Belize), speaking on behalf of the 14 Member States of the Caribbean Community (Caricom) said that in the context of the preparations for the 10-year review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, the members of Caricom and other Caribbean countries had met in October 2003 in Trinidad and Tobago to assess their achievements as well as the difficulties and new problems they faced in their efforts to attain sustainable development. They had reaffirmed their determination to ensure that improving the quality of life of their peoples would remain at the heart of their aspirations in that regard. That was why they would continue to urge the international community to seek a better balance between the three aspects of sustainable development, namely, the economic, social and ecological aspects.

107. As small island developing States, the Caribbean countries wished to point out that sustainable development was inextricably linked to environmental protection and preservation. Those countries had made substantial investments in the protection of their ecosystems, and the excellent results they had achieved were evidenced in the fact that they had increased the number of protected areas. However, the deterioration of habitats was still a problem, indicating that the measures taken needed to be supplemented by other initiatives.

108. The impact of climate change and sea level rise remained a matter of serious concern. Although the small island developing States accounted for only a small share of pollution, they were extremely vulnerable to it. The Caricom countries urged the members of the international community to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, to fulfil their commitments and to increase their assistance to small vulnerable countries so as to help them better adapt to the consequences of climate change and sea level rise. The small island developing States, for their part, were devising strategies to strengthen their capacity to adapt and to better handle the risks they faced. They were anxious to collaborate with the international community on a number of issues, including the establishment of strategic alliances to overcome size constraints, capacity building, improving competitive strategies, diversification, reduction of dependency on energy imports, use of information technology, education and others.

109. The Caribbean countries were aware of the need to coordinate their efforts, and they were setting up appropriate national and regional coordination mechanisms. They were also well aware of the fact that sustainable development required the participation of all stakeholders at the national, regional and global levels. At the national and regional levels, they were holding large-scale consultations to promote increased public participation in decision making, and they were working to ensure that civil society organizations and community organizations were well represented in the agencies concerned. At the international level, they urged their partners to remain true to the commitments on poverty eradication and environmental protection which they had made in Rio and Barbados and reaffirmed at the Millennium Summit and the Monterrey and Johannesburg Conferences.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.